THE QUAKERS PLEA WITH THE BISHOPS AT THEIR Ecclesiastical Courts.

OR,

An Answer of the People of God, reproachfully called *Quakers*, to the Bill of Presentment put against them into the Bishops Courts, for not coming to the Church as is pretended. Whereby it may appear, that the *Quakers*, so called, do come to the Church, both according to the Scriptures, and Common-Prayer books account, and ought not in equity and reason to be presented, or punished for that, *&c.*

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By *Richard Farnsworth.*

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BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

THE

QUAKERS

PLEA

FOR

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OR

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The Quakers Plea with the Biſhops at their Eccleſiaſtical Courts, &c.

WHereas the People of God (reproachfully called *Quakers*) are preſented to the *Biſhops* as Offenders, for not coming to the Church, as is pretended. Now if we can make it appear (as we hope we can) according to truth, the Scripture, & Common-Prayer account, that we are the onely people (or of them) that do come to the Church and Service of God, then we ought in equity and reaſon to be cleared, and clearly acquitted from thoſe pretended offences, and from all puniſhments due thereunto; & the caſe in controverſie ought to be terminated, and we to be acquitted, and clearly diſcharged therefrom, and our Accuſers to be ſharply reproved, to the end and intent that they do ſo no more.

One main queſtion, or thing enquirable by the Biſhops, or their Officers, of us, at their Eccleſiaſtical Courts now in this age and time, is, Whether we come to the Church and Service of God, or no?

In order to a full and ſatisfactory anſwer to the things in that caſe charged againſt us, we ask, What is it that you do really own to be, or call, and account the Church? Whether the Church according to your own account, be the Cathedrals and Pariſh Meeting-places, becauſe many in ignorance call them the Church? And whether doth the Scriptures or Common-Prayer book account, or declare Cathedrals, or Pariſh Meeting-places to be the onely true Churches, which we and all the people of God are enjoined to come unto, in point of Religion and worſhip of God, according to Goſpel-order, and practice of the people of God under that diſpenſation, as left upon record in the holy Scriptures? If in anſwer thereunto you ſay no; then we further enquire, Whe-

ther you would have us to own that to be the only true Church of Christ, which is neither really owned, or declared so to be, either by the *Scriptures*, or Common-Prayer-book? And would you make us offenders, when neither Scripture nor Common-Prayer-book maketh us so? or would you punish us as offenders for not coming to that which in reallity is neither owned by the Scripture, or Common-Prayer-book? Is there any equity or reason for that? Consider well of it, and if upon serious consideration, the witness of God in you answer the equitableness and justness of our innocent cause, & tel you by testifying to your consciences, that there is neither equity nor reason to punish us as offenders, for that which is neither owned by the Scripture, or Common-Prayer-book, becaufe you profess them both as your rules in point of Religion and worship of God. Then be advised, and do not proceed against us in judgement, when the witness of God in your own consciences answereth for us, lest God the righteous Judge enter into judgement with you for so doing.

And if you be convinced and perswaded in your hearts and consciences, that Cathedrals, or Parish-Meeting-places are not the onely true Church of Christ, (as well you may, if you have any right understanding in the things of God, according to Gospel dispensation) becaufe the *Scriptures* do declare the onely true Church to be the body of Christ, and Christ to be the head of the Church, which is his body, as it is written and left upon Record in *Scripture*, *Ephes.* 1. 22, 23.

And if you do believe that the Church is the body of *Christ*, and that Christ is the head of his body the Church, then you may well be convinced and perswaded (or at least ought) that Cathedrals, or Parish Meeting-places are not the Church, becaufe Cathedrals, and Parish-Meeting-places are not the body of Christ,

Christ so loved the Church, that he gave himself for it, that he might sanctifie and cleanse it, and make it unto himself a glorious Church, that it should be holy and without blemish, *Eph.* 5. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27. And also the Lord doth nourish and cherish the Church, as it is written, *Eph.* 5. 28, 29.

But where is it written, that Cathedrals and Parish-Meeting-places

places (commonly called Parish churches) are the body of Christ, or that Christ is the Head of them, or that Christ laid down his life for them, or that they are nourished and cherish-by the Lord, as aforesaid?

If you say, Cathedrals and Parish Meeting places, commonly called Parishes, are not the body of Christ, therefore not the Church, neither did Christ lay down his life for them, neither are they nourished and cherished by the Lord, as aforesaid therefore we do not account them the Church.

What then is it that you call and account the Church, and require us to come unto, which we are presented for not coming to? if you say and confess that Cathedrals and Parish Meeting places, commonly called Parish Churches, is not the thing you require us to come unto, because it is evident by the Scriptures and Common-prayer Book, that Cathedrals and parish Meeting places are not the Church, which is the body of Christ; and nourished and cherished by the Lord, as aforesaid.

We further ask, What is the Church? If you deny Cathedrals and parish-metting-places to be the Church, as aforesaid; are the ungodly people, such as are not governed and sanctified by the Spirit of God, (though they may meet in Cathedrals and parish-meeting-places) the Church, which is the body of Christ, subject unto Christ, and as aforesaid?

And if you say, No: They who are not governed and sanctified by the Spirit of God, are not true Members of the Church of God. If so, then may not we say, That though we may not come to Cathedrals or parish meeting places, commonly called parish churches, nor meet in point of Religion and Worship of God, with such people as are not governed & sanctified by the Spirit of God, it cannot properly be said, that we do not come to the church, neither ought we to be presented or punished for refusing to meet in point of Religion and Worship of God with them who are not governed and sanctified by the Spirit of the Lord, though they may meet in Cathedrals or parish-meeting-places, commonly called parish churches as aforesaid.

Concerning the Church what it is, according to Scripture-account.

THe ſanctified and beloved people of God are in *Scripture* accounted and declared to be the Church of God. It is ſaid in *Eph.*5.25. *Chriſt ſo loved the Church, that he gave himſelf for it.* And in *Eph.*5.1,2. it is ſaid concerning the Saints, *Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children, and walk in love, even as Chriſt hath loved us, and hath given himſelf for us, Chriſt ſo loved the Church, that he gave himſelf for it,* Eph.5.25. And *Chriſt ſo loved us, that he gave himſelf for us,* (ſaid the Saints and beloved people of God, *Eph.*5.1,2.) Therefore the *Saints* and beloved people of God, according both to the *Scripture* and our account, are the *Church*, as aforeſaid. And ſuch we meet withal, therefore we come to the Church.

But fornication and all uncleanneſs, or covetouſneſs, let it not be once named amongſt you, as becometh Saints, *Eph.*5.3. Fornication and uncleanneſs are things not owned by the Church, neither filthineſs, neither fooliſh talking nor jeſting, which are things not comely, as it is written, *Eph.*5.3,4. Theſe things are caſt out of the Church, and are found amongſt the unſanctified people, who are not governed and ſanctified by the Spirit of God.

The *Scriptures* do own the *Saints* and beloved people of God to be the Church of God, and we own them ſo to be. Therefore with the Scriptures we concur and agree, 1*Theſ.*2.14. *Acts* 13.1,2,3. *Matth.*18.15,16,17 *Acts* 20.28. *Col.*1.24,25. *Eph.* 5.27,28,29,30,31,32.

The Scripture ſaith, *That holineſs becometh the Houſe of the Lord for ever;* and we ſay the ſame; therefore the Scriptures and we agree in one. And the people of God in the New-Covenant are ſaid to be the Houſe of God, *Heb.*3.5,6. therefore holineſs becometh them. The Scripture ſaith, That the Saints or people of God are the Houſe and Houſhold of God, and we ſay the ſame; therefore the *Scriptures* and we agree in one, 1*Tim.*3.15. *Eph.*2.19,20,21,22.

The

The Church of God in the New Covenant and Gospel-dispensation is the House of God; and the people of God are the Church of God: Therefore the people of God in the New Covenant and Gospel-dispensation, are the House of God, as may be read, *1 Tim.* 3, 15. *Eph.* 5, 23, 24. *Heb.* 3, 5, 6. *1 Pet.* 2, 5.

To meet in point of Religion and Worship of God with them who as dear children are followers of God, *Eph.* 5. 1, 2, is to come to the Church; and such we meet withall in point of Religion and Worship of God; therefore we come to the Church according to the Scripture-account, as aforesaid.

The Church according to the Scripture account, is the Houshold of God; and the Saints & beloved people of God are the Houshold of God, as may be read *Eph.* 2. 19, 20. Therefore the Saints and beloved people of God, according to the Scripture account, are the Church, as foresaid.

To meet in point of Religion and Worship of God, with the Houshold of God, is to come to the Church, according to the Scripture account; and we meet in point of Religion and Worship of God, with the Houshold of God; therefore we come to the Church according to the Scripture account, as aforesaid.

They who come to the Church according to the Scripture account, ought not in equity and reason to be presented for not coming to the Church: And we (who are reproachfully called *Quakers*) do come to the Church according to the Scripture account; therefore we ought not to be presented or punished for not coming to the Church, by them that own the Scriptures as their Rule in point of Religion; there is neither Equity nor reason for it.

The Houshold of God, which is the Church, are builded upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, as may be seen, *Eph.* 2, 18, 19, 20. Then they who are builded upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, are the Church, the Houshold of God. And we who are reproached for the Name of Jesus, and are built upon the Light and Power of God, are built upon the Foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, Christ Jesus himself being the chief

cor-

Corner-ſtone, We are of the Houſhold and Family of God, and do come to the Church, according to the Scripture-account; And by the Church we are neither preſentable nor puniſhable for that.

They who are governed and ſanctified by the Spirit of God, are true Members of the Church of God, 1 *Cor.* 1. 2. *Rom.* 9. 1. And we witneſs on the behalf of the Lord, and the Lords Spirit beareth witneſs on our behalf, That we are governed and ſanctified by the Spirit of God, *Rom.* 8. 14, 15, 16. 17. Therefore we are true Members of the Church of God, and are neither preſentable nor puniſhable for not coming to the Church, eſpecially by them who own the government and ſanctification of the Spirit in declaration, though they ſeem to come far ſhort thereof in life and converſation.

And if you ſay, *It's true, we come to the Church according to the Scripture account, and you do not preſent us, or go about to puniſh us for that, but becauſe we come not to the Church according to the Common-Prayer-Book account*, Well,

Concerning the Church, what it is according to the Common-Prayer-Book account.

IF it be granted that we (who are reproachfully called *Quakers*) do come to the Church according to the Scripture-account, and are neither preſentable nor puniſhable for that, then therein we are cleared. And if you ſay we are preſented for not coming to the Church according to the account of the Common-Prayer-Book, then if we can make it appear by the Common-Prayer, that we come to the Church according to the account of the Common-Prayer, as aforeſaid, then by your own rule, and that according to Equity and Reaſon, we ought to be clearly acquitted from the force of the aforeſaid preſentment, and therefore diſcharged to all intents, conſtructions, and purpoſes whatſoever. If you ſay yea, then be men of your word, and let your yea be yea, by making good what you ſay, and we ſhall proceed to prove the thing in hand, or matter in queſtion,

queſtion aforementioned, that is, *Whether we come to the Church according to the Common-Prayer-Book account, or not?*

To the which we anſwer and ſay, We do come to the Church according to the Common-Prayer-Book, and are therefore neither preſentable nor puniſhable for that, but ought in equity and reaſon to be acquitted and clearly diſcharged therefrom, as aforeſaid.

And if you ſay, it is not ſufficiently proved by our affirmation aforeſaid; We ſay, We do not ſay that which is falſe, but regard our word, and our yea is yea; therefore you may believe it for a truth in what we have ſaid; but if you would have a further proof for the ſame, we ask (in order thereunto) whether you own that only to be the Church, which the Common-Prayer-Book owneth, or declareth ſo to be? If you ſay yea; then ſtand to your word, and be as you ſay, and we ſhall give you a further proof to make good what we have ſaid, *viz.* That we come to the Church according to the account of the Common-Prayer-Book.

And if it be asked, Who, or what ſort of people are owned by, or declared, in the Common-Prayer-book to be the church of God? It is anſwered, That they who are governed and ſanctified by the Spirit of God, are the only people owned by; or declared in the Common-Prayer-Book to be the church of God.

Then to meet in point of Religion and Worſhip of God, with them who are governed and ſanctified by the Spirit of God, is to come to the church, according to the account of the Common-prayer-book. But we (who are reproachfully called *Quakers*) do meet with them who are governed and ſanctified by the Spirit of God, in point of Religion and Worſhip of God; therefore we come to the church as aforeſaid.

And ſo we ought to have equal liberty and toleration with you in point of Religion and Worſhip of God. The Common Prayer Book owneth or declareth the Houſhold and Family of God, to be the church of God. And we ſay, That the Houſhold and Family of God, are the ſaints and beloved people of God: Therefore to meet in point of Religion and Worſhip of God, with the Houſhold and Family of God, which are the ſaints

and beloved people of God, is to come to the Church according to the account of the Common-Prayer book, and we met in point of Religion and worſhip of God with the houſhold and family of God; therefore we come to the Church, as aforeſaid, and are neither preſentable nor puniſhable for that by the Church before mentioned.

For proof that the Church is owned, or declared by the Common-Prayer book to be the houſhold and family of God, See the 5 Sunday after *Epiphany*, the Collect (ſo called) where it is ſaid, *Lord keep thy Church and houſhold continually in thy true Religion.* And ſee 22 Sunday after *Trinity*, the Collect (ſo called) where it is ſaid, *Lord we beſeech thee to keep thy houſhold the Church in continual godlineſs.* Here the Church is declared to be the houſhold of God, and it is the work or act of God to keep it in continual godlineſs. Then they who are in continual ungodlineſs, are not accounted the houſhold and Church of God, as aforeſaid, becauſe they are not willing to be ordered and kept by the Lord in continual godlineſs, as aforeſaid. So that wicked and unſanctified people are not accounted the Church by the Common-Prayer book, neither are we enjoyned thereby to come to meet with wicked and unſanctified people in point of Religion, nor preſentable for refuſing ſo to do.

5 Sund. after Epiph. Coll. and 22 Sund. after Trinit. Coll.

And for proof that the Church is accounted the family of God; ſee *Good Friday*, the Collect (ſo called) and moreover it is there ſaid, *Almighty and everlaſting God, by whoſe Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and ſanctified.* So that the whole body of that Church which is owned or declared of in the Common-Prayer book, is ſaid to be governed and ſanctified by the Spirit of God as aforeſaid: then that body which is not governed and ſanctified by the Spirit of God, is not there owned or declared by the Common-Prayer book to be the Church of God aforementioned. If the whole body of the Church be governed and ſanctified by the Spirit of God, then every particular member of that body is under the government and ſanctification of that Spirit. And if the whole body of the Church of God be governed and ſanctified by the ſpirit of God, whether are they any Miniſters or members of the Church of God, who are not governed and ſanctified by the

Spirit

Spirit of God? for it is ſaid by the Apoſtle, *If any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his*, Rom. 8. 9. (no Miniſter of Chriſt, nor member of his Church.) And doth not the Common-Prayer-book ſay the ſame in effect, in ſaying, That the Church of God is the houſhold and family of God, and that the whole body of the Church is governed and ſanctified by the Spirit of God? Doth it not therefore follow that they are no Miniſters of Chriſt, nor members of his Church, who are not governed and ſanctified by the Spirit of God, as aforeſaid? If ſo, whether they who dayly err and go aſtray from the ways of God, be governed and ſanctified by the Spirit of God; and if they who dayly err and go aſtray from the ways of *God*, be not governed and ſanctified by the Spirit of God, whether ſuch be any Miniſters of Chriſt, or members of the Church of God? and whether ſuch as daily offend againſt Gods holy Laws, be governed and ſanctified by Gods holy Spirit? becauſe Gods holy *Spirit* doth not lead men daily to offend his own Laws. Or whether any for denying or refuſing for conſcience towards God, to meet in point of Religion and Worſhip of God with them who daily err and go aſtray from the ways of God, and for neglecting to meet with ſuch as are not governed and ſanctified by the Spirit of God, can or ought in equity and reaſon according to truth be ſaid to deny and refuſe to come to the Church, which is the houſhold and family of God, who are ſanctified and governed by the Spirit of God, as aforeſaid? will it not follow then, and that from the Common-Prayer-book, *viz.*

1 That the Church of *God* is the houſhold and family of *God*, and that the houſhold and family of *God* are the *Saints* and beloved people of *God*?

2 That the family and houſhold of *God* are governed and ſanctified by the Spirit of *God*, and they are the houſhold and family of *God*, who are governed and ſanctified by the *Spirit* of *God*?

3 That to come to, and meet with the houſhold and family of God, is to come to, and meet with the Church of *God*?

4 That to meet in point of Religion and worſhip of *God* with them who are governed and ſanctified by the Spirit of *God*, is to come to the Church and ſervice of *God*?

5. That they who are not governed and ſanctified by the Spirit of God, are not the Church of God.

6. That to refuſe for conſcience towards God to meet in point of Religion and worſhip of God, with them who daily err and go aſtray from the ways of God, and are not governed and ſanctified by the Spirit of God, is not to refuſe to come to the Church as aforeſaid.

7. That they who daily offend againſt God's holy Laws, and being untaught of God, daily err from his ways, and refuſe to meet in point of Religion and worſhip of God, with the houſhold of God, which is governed and ſanctified by the Spirit of God; thoſe are ſuch as neglect to come to the Church and ſervice of God.

For we ſay the Saints and beloved people of God are under the adminiſtration and teaching of the light and Spirit of God, and ſubject thereunto. And they are the Saints and beloved people of God, who are under the adminiſtration and teachings of the Light and Spirit of God, and ſubject thereunto, as aforeſaid. *For the grace of God which bringeth ſalvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us, that denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world; as it is written,* Tit. 2. 11, 12.

The grace of God hath a teaching office in the hearts of the people of *God*, and they are taught by the grace of God to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, in order to a godly life and converſation. They who in obedience to the teachings of the grace, do deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, in order to a godly life & converſation, do make it appear thereby, that they are under the adminiſtration of the grace of God, and ſubject thereunto. And it is an evident demonſtration that ſuch are the beloved people of *God*; and we who are reproachfully called Quakers, are under the teachings of the grace of *God*, and it is apparent to the world by our denial of ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, in order to a godly life and converſation, humbly be it ſpoken in the denial of all ſelf-juſtification.

And the *Common-Prayer* doth acknowledge, that God doth inſtruct his holy Church with heavenly doctrine, (ſee S. *Marks* day

day in the Collect ſo called) (Here the Church of *God* is not declared to be a company of miſerable ſinners, who have no ſouls health in them; and if they have no ſouls health in them, have they any cure of ſouls or heavenly doctrine in them? but) the Church is here declared to be a holy Church. And on *Good Friday* ſo called) in the Collect, the whole body of the Church is ſaid to be governed and ſanctified by the Spirit of *God*. So that the Church which is governed and ſanctified by the Spirit of God, is declared to be the holy Church; and the holy *C*hurch is a ſanctified body, and under a ſpiritual Government; becauſe the whole body of the Church is governed and ſanctified by the Spirit of God, as aforeſaid. And ſuch a Church we own and come unto as is holy, and inſtructed by the Lord with heavenly doctrine.

If God inſtruct his holy Church with heavenly doctrine, and the people of God be the holy Church which *God* doth ſo inſtruct; then the people of God are a holy people, and under the adminiſtrations and teachings of the Light and holy ſpirit of God, which we own in principle, doctrine, and converſation: And you own the ſame in declaration; are you not then in words, or declaration therein become one with thoſe you call Quakers? How can you then in equity and reaſon go about to preſent or puniſh us for owning in life and converſation, that which you own in declaration, but ſeem to come ſhort of in life and converſation? Conſider well of it, and let the light and ſpirit of God judge in this caſe between you and us, and joyn you therewith; ſo will you clearly acquit and juſtifie us, and our innocent cauſe, which is the cauſe of a good conſcience. *S. Mark day Coll.*

And on *Sim.* and *Jude*, in the Collect (ſo called) it is ſaid, *Almighty God which haſt builded thy Congregation upon the foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief corner-ſtone.* Here again may it not be obſerved, that *C*athedrals and Pariſh Meeting-places, nor a company of miſerable ſinners, though they may meet therein, are not accounted the Church, which is the building and holy Congregation of God, by him builded upon the foundation of the Prophets and Apoſtles, Chriſt Jeſus himſelf, as aforeſaid. *Sim. & Jude the Coll.*

Then

Then to meet in point of Religion and worſhip of God with them who are ſought and taught of the Lord according to *John* 4. 23, and 6. 44, 45. and are the holy Congregation, or building of God by him built upon a ſpiritual foundation of the Prophets and Apoſtles, Chriſt Jeſus himſelf, as aforeſaid, according to *Eph.* 2. 18, 19, 20, 21, 22. is to come to the holy Church and houſhold of God, which is governed and ſanctified by the Spirit of *God*; though they may not come to a Cathedral, or Pariſh Meeting-place, to meet with a company of miſerable ſinners, who have no health in them, as aforeſaid.

The holy Church is a ſanctified Church, both according to the Scripture and Common-prayer account, and they who are governed and ſanctified by the Spirit of God, are the holy Church, as aforeſaid; and ſuch a Church we are members of, and come to in point of Religion and worſhip of God.

Concerning the ſervice of God

2 *Coll. for peace.* In the ſecond Collect for peace, it is ſaid, *O God which art the author of peace, and lover of concord, in knowledge of whom ſtandeth eternall life, whoſe ſervice is perfect freedom.*

If God be the Author of peace, then he is not the author of perſecution about matters of Religion, but a lover of concord; and lovers of God are lovers of peace and concord. Who then are the authors of perſecution about matters of Conſcience in point of Religion and worſhip of God? For our Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath ſaid to his friends, who do his commands, *John* 15. 14. *I command you that ye love one another*: John 15. 17. *If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you*: *Remember the word that I ſaid unto you, The ſervant is not greater then the Lord*: *If they have perſecuted me, they will perſecute you*, *John* 15. 18, 19, 20.

True Chriſtians the friends of Chriſt, that are obedient unto his commands, they love one another with the love of Chriſt, and are hated and perſecuted by the ſpirit of the world for their love and faithfulneſs unto Chriſt.

And

And whereas it is ſaid, that *the ſervice of God is perfect freedom*, what is it then? is it not a freedom from ſin, wrath, and condemnation? and are not they that are in the ſervice of God in perfect freedom? And if the ſervice of God be perfect freedom, whether ought any to be forced either to it, or from it, by outward compulſion? and if you ſay, though the ſervice of God be perfect freedom, yet it is not perfect freedom from ſin, what is it perfect freedom from, and unto? ſeeing that the Apoſtle ſaith, when ye were the ſervants of ſin, ye were free from righteouſneſs, *Rom.* 6. 20. Are ſervants of ſin free from righteouſneſs? who are they then, who daily err and go aſtray from the ways of God, and daily offend againſt *Gods* holy Laws, being as themſelves ſay, miſerable ſinners? What fruit have they then in thoſe things, whereof they are now aſhamed? for (ſaith the Apoſtles) *the end of thoſe things is death*; *Rom.* 6.20.21. But the ſame Apoſtle ſpeaks of a freedom from ſin, ſaying, *Now being made free from ſin, and become ſervants to God, ye have your fruit unto holineſs, and the end everlaſting life*, *Rom.* 6.22,23. They who are free from ſin, are at liberty to ſerve the Lord, whoſe fruit is unto holineſs, and the end thereof is life everlaſting, as aforeſaid.

Concerning the Light.

In the third Collect for aid againſt all perils: it is ſaid, *Lighten our darkneſs we beſeech thee O Lord.* Are you yet in darkneſs, and not illuminated, becauſe you ſay, *Lighten our darkneſs we beſeech thee, O Lord?* And again, in the Letany you ſay, *That it may pleaſe thee to illuminate all Biſhops, Paſtors, & Miniſters of the Church.* Are the Biſhops, Paſtors, and Miniſters of the Church in darkneſs, and not yet illuminated; or doth *God* ſend forth Biſhops, Paſtors, and Miniſters, before illumination? Becauſe the Apoſtles and Miniſters of Chriſt, ſaid, *We preach not our ſelves, but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, and our ſelves your ſervant for Jeſus ſake*, 2 Cor. 4,5, 6,7. *For God who commanded light to ſhine out of darkneſs, hath ſhined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt; but we have this treaſure in earthen veſſels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*

The

The Miniſters of Chriſt were not in darkneſs, but in the light, and therefore illuminated, and were ſent to illuminate others, or to turn them from darkneſs unto light: they who by vertue of their preaching, did turn people from darkneſs unto light, they did convert people from their ſinful ways and courſes unto God, by turning them from the power of Satan unto God; and ſuch were and are the true Miniſters and Meſſengers of God. That light which turns people from the power of Satan unto God, is a ſoul-converting light; and they who in the power of that light, and by vertue thereof do by their preaching turn people from darkneſs unto light, they do convert them by their Miniſtry on the Lords behalf from their ſinful ways and courſes, by turning them from the power of Satan unto God; and ſuch are the Miniſters of Chriſt, as aforeſaid.

The light of Chriſt declared of in the Scripture, and now owned and born witneſs of by the people of God called *Quakers*, is that light which turns people from their ſinful ways and courſes unto God, who believe in, and obey the ſame. Therefore that light is a ſoul-converting light, as aforeſaid.

And for owning, holding forth, and bearing witneſs of this light, in principle, doctrine, and converſation, have the people of God called Quakers, met with great oppoſition and perſecution. And now this light is acknowledged by common confeſſion; therefore inaſmuch as you own the light by common confeſſion, how can you in equity and reaſon raiſe oppoſition againſt us, or preſent, and puniſh us, for owning in principle, doctrine, and converſation, that which you confeſs unto, and own in declaration.

It is ſaid (3. Sunday after Eaſter in the Collect ſo called) *Almighty God, which ſheweſt to all men that be in error, the light of thy truth, to the intent that they may return into the way of righteouſneſs*. And we ſay the ſame; do you not herein with us agree in declaration, or are you not in this principled for Quakers ſo called. How then can you in equity and reaſon puniſh us for owning in principle, doctrine, and converſation, that which you yourſelves own in declaration? You ſay that Almighty God doth ſhew the light of his truth to all men that be in errour, to the intent that they may return into the way of righteouſneſs. Do you not be

here confeſs and acknowledge theſe ſix things?

1 That God is the author of the light.

2 That the light it ſelf is a pure, ſpiritual, ſoul-ſaving juſtifying light, in its own nature and poperty, and alſo to them who believe in, and obey the ſame.

3 That the Act of diſcovery, or manifeſtation of the Light, is Gods own act.

4 That the perſons, or parties to whom the Light is ſo diſcovered, ſhewn, or made manifeſt, are all men without exception.

5 That the ſtate and condition wherein they are at the firſt diſcovery or manifeſtation of the Light unto them, is whilſt they are in errour, and out of the way of the Lord.

6 That the intent of Gods act of diſcovery and manifeſtation of the Light unto them, is that they may come out of errour, & the ways of unrighteouſneſs, into the way of righteouſneſs, peace and ſalvation, which is the way of the Lord.

If ſo, do you not acknowledge and confeſs,

That all men are in errour, and out of the way of the Lord, until they believe in, and receive the Light of the Lord to lead them therefrom, and guide them unto God from whence the Light doth come.

That all men who believe in, and receive the light of the Lord after diſcovery and manifeſtation thereof, do come out of darkneſs, errour, and the ways of unrighteouſneſs, into the ways of righteouſneſs, peace, and ſalvation, which is the way of the Lord?

That the way from errour and hereſie, is the light which God diſcovers, with an intent to lead all that believes in, and obeys the ſame, out of errour & hereſie into the way of righteonſneſs, the way of the Lord?

That the light of God guides men out of errour, in point of ſalvation and worſhip of God, and leads them unto God that believes in, and receives the ſame, according to the act of diſcovery, and intent of God, as aforeſaid?

Then to reject the light of Gods truth after Gods act of diſcovery thereof, by refuſing & denying to yield obedience thereunto, is to reject God, who is the author of the light, and to

reject Gods act of discovery of the light; and also to reject Gods love held forth in the intent of the discovery thereof; and such remains in errour, and are out of the way of righteousness, and very unfit to guide others into the ways of God, who daily err and go astray therefrom themselves.

And how can any be competent Judges of errour, who themselves are subject unto, & daily live in errour? And if errour from the ways of God be an offence punishable by Law, what Law is it punishable by? and are not they daily punishable by the same Law, who daily err and go astray from the ways of God, and do daily offend against Gods holy Laws?

Forasmuch as you own in declaration many of those things which we own in life and conversation, though you seem to come farr short of in conversation, you ought not in equity or reason to punish us as offenders about matters of conscience in point of Religion & worship of God, but rather give us the right hand of fellowship, and equal liberty with you in point of Religion and worship of God, because we own in life and conversation many things which you own in declaration, which we could be glad to behold and meet you in, in life and conversation (setting all your contradictions aside) You own purity of heart in declaration, and we own the same in principle and practice, or life and conversation? How can you be offended at us for holding forth purity of heart in conversation, when you own the same in declaration? where the Priest exhorts the people, saying, *I pray and beseech you, as many as be here present, to accompany me with a pure heart, saying after me*: and they must say with him, that they have daily erred and strayed from the ways of God like lost sheep, and that they have followed too much the devices and desires of their own hearts, and that they have daily offended against Gods holy Laws; and that they have left undone those things which they ought to have done, and that they have done those things which they ought not to have done, and that there is no health in them, but they are they say, miserable sinners. Are these the signs of a pure heart? and if there be no health, neither in Priest nor people, is there any cure of souls in them? is it not spoken in reference to souls health? because there is bodily

health

health in them, when they make that confeſſion. And if there be no ſouls health in them, is there a ſound or pure heart in them? yet they allow of purity of heart however, and that it is a Chriſtians duty to accompany one another in prayer with a pure heart to the throne of the heavenly grace; and we acknowledg it to be our duty and practice to accompany one another in prayer with a pure heart to the throne of the heavenly grace.

And preſently after they have ackno ledged purity of heart, and made their confeſſion, as aforeſaid, they ſay, *We beſeech him to grant us true repentance and his holy ſpirit, that thoſe things may pleaſe him which we do at this preſent, and that the reſt of our life hereafter may be pure and holy.* Here they beg repentance and Gods holy Spirit, as if they had not yet received the ſame. However they ought not to be offended at others who have obtained repentance, and received the holy ſpirit, becauſe they pray for the ſame: and it is alſo to be obſerved, that they acknowledge that the people of God, by vertue of the Spirit of God are guided and impoured to pray and perform the things that are good, acceptable and well pleaſing unto God, and we own the ſame; here they own in declaration the principle and practice of the people of God called Quakers, and therefore ought not to be offended at them for the ſame *viz.* that the people of *God*, by vertue of the Spirit of *God*, are guided and impowered to pray and perform the things that are good, acceptable and well-pleaſing to the Lord; and that the people of God who have obtained repentance, and received the Spirit of *God*, are by the ſame directed and enabled to live in purity and holineſs of life continually, which is well-pleaſing unto the Lord.

And you ſay, *O God, make clean our hearts within us, and take not thy holy Spirit from us.* Then you account that you have the holy Spirit, or elſe what need you pray that it be not taken from you? that cannot be taken from one, if he have it not; however you ought not to be offended at others for having and owning the Spirit, becauſe you acknowledge you have it your ſelves. You alſo confeſs that your hearts are unclean, ſaying, *O God, make clean our hearts within us*; and before the Prieſt ſaid, *I pray and beſeech you, as many as be here preſent, to accompany me with a pure heart.* If you had a pure heart when you begun your ſervice, how

comes your hearts to be unclean before you have done, or were they not as unclean before? however you acknowledge that your hearts are unclean within you, and that it is the work of Gods holy ſpirit within to cleanſe the heart from its inward uncleanneſs, though you cannot yet witneſs the ſame to be done in your ſelves, whoſe hearts you ſay are unclean.

You ſay, (firſt Sunday in *Advent*, in the Collect ſo called) *Almighty God, give us grace that we may caſt away the works of darkneſs, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortall life.* It ſeems though you acknowledge, that you have not yet caſt away the works of darkneſs, nor put upon you the armour of light; you do account it to be a Chriſtians duty to caſt away the works of darkneſs, & to put upon them the armour of Light. And the people of God, by vertue of the grace of God, are enabled to caſt away the works of darkneſs, and to put upon them the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life. And therefore you ought not to puniſh them for ſo doing.

You ſay, *Almighty God, mortifie and kill all vices in us*, (*Innocents* day in the Collect.) Though vices yet live in you, it is to be obſerved, 1 That you acknowledge it to be the work of God to mortifie and kill all vices inwardly in the hearts of people. 2. That people ought to have all vices mortified & killed in them by the power of God, whilſt they live upon the face of the earth. 3 That you allow of the work of God in mortifying & killing all vices inwardly in others, becauſe you pray for it to be done in your ſelves: then you ought to allow of them as the people of God, & be in love with them, wherein God hath ſo appeared, as to mortifie & kil all vices within them: then you ought to allow of us as the peopl of God, & be in love with us, becauſe God hath been pleaſed to mortifie & kil all vices in us (who are reproachfully called *Quakers*) as much as in any people this day upon the face of the earth. And our blameleſs life and godly converſation doth teſtifie the ſame, to the praiſe of the glory of his grace who hath called us out of darkneſs into his marvellous light.

And do you not acknowledge & own inſpiration, & that the thoughts of your hearts are unclean; when you are about the receiving of that called Communion? becauſe there you ſay, *Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all deſires known, and from whom*

whom no ſecrets are hid, cleanſe thou the thoughts of our hearts by the inſpiration of thy holy ſpirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnifie thy holy name. May it not be obſerved, that you hereby do acknowledge, 1 That the thoughts of your hearts (and at ſuch a time as when you ſay you are at the Table of the Lord) are unclean within you? 2 That the uncleanneſs of the thoughts of your hearts is the cauſe of the imperfection of your love to God. 3 That it is the act of God, by the inſpiration of his holy Spirit, to take away the uncleanneſs of the thoughts of the heart, which were the cauſe of imperfection of love towards God, as aforeſaid 4 That the uncleanneſs of the thoughts of the heart being removed and taken away, the heart is made capable of being perfect in love towards *God*, even to love him perfectly, and worthily to magnifie his holy name.

And you acknowledge, that all your doings without charity are nothing worth, and therefore you deſire God to ſend his holy Spirit, and pour into your hearts that moſt excellent gift of charity (*Quinquageſ.* Coll.) If all your actions be nothing worth without charity, and if you yet want that excellent gift of charity, becauſe you pray for it, and for the Spirit to pour it into your hearts, what are your actions worth without charity? your ſelves confeſs they are nothing worth without it; then wait to receive the *Spirit* to pour forth that excellent gift of charity into your hearts. And when you have received that gift, you will not unworthily puniſh us, or any of Gods people for matters of conſcience in point of Religion and worſhip of God, but will ſee it juſt that we have equal liberty and tolleration with you in point of Religion and worſhip of God.

And to that holy Spirit of *God*, by which the whole body of the Church is governed and ſanctified, which doth cleanſe the thoughts of the heart by its holy inſpiration or operation, and pour into the ſanctified heart that moſt excellent gift of charity, to that we can commit our innocent cauſe, which will be for our vindication and juſtification

If you were a pure-hearted people, you would not cauſe us to ſuffer by you for the ſame; that would be to contradict and oppoſe your own principles. For a pure heart is a ſanctified heart, and doth not oppoſe it ſelf in a ſanctified people. If you were

governed

governed and ſanctified by the Spirit of God, you would love us and be one with us in matters of conſcience in point of Religion and worſhip of God; becauſe we own in principle and practice the government and ſanctification of the Spirit of God: and therefore we ought in equity and reaſon to be beloved of you, and tollerated by you in matters of Religion and worſhip of God, becauſe you own that in declaration, which we own in principle and practice, or life and converſation.

And whereas you own the light of Gods truth in declaration, to enlighten mens darkneſs, or that men are enlightned by it whilſt they are in darkneſs, errour, and the ways of unrighteouſneſs, to the end that they may come out of errour, and the ways of unrighteouſneſs, into the ways of righteouſneſs, which is the way of the Lord; and as aforeſaid, you own in declaration, that which we own in principle, doctrine, and converſation, who have believed in, received, and obeyed the light of *Gods* truth, according to Gods act and intent of diſcovery, and manifeſtation thereof; and are by the light led out of darkneſs, errour, and the ways of unrighteouſneſs into the way of the Lord, as aforeſaid: therefore you ought to love us, and let us have equal liberty and toleration with you in matters of Religion and worſhip of *God*, and free us from the force of the aforeſaid Preſentment, and ſtand up amongſt men and Chriſtians for the vindication and juſtification of the people of God called Quakers, becauſe you own in declaration, purity of heart, divine and ſpiritual teachings, the government and ſanctification of the ſpirit of God amongſt the people of God, the light of Gods truth alſo to guide men out of errour and the ways of unrighteouſneſs, into the way of righteouſneſs, peace, and ſalvation; and that it is a Chriſtians duty by vertue of the grace of God received, to caſt away the works of darkneſs, and put on the armour of light now in the time of this mortal life; and that all vices are to be mortified and killed in the hearts of the people of God; that by inſpiration and operation of *Gods* holy Spirit, the thoughts of mens hearts are to be cleanſed, to the end that they may perfectly love the Lord God, and worthily magnifie his holy name; that the people of God who have obtained repentance, and received Gods holy Spirit, are to live in continual holineſs and godlineſs; and by vertue of the *Spirit* of

God

God received, are impowered to pray and perform the things that are good, acceptable and well pleasing to the Lord. That the people of *God* by the Spirit of God have a right judgment in all things. And that the hearts of Gods people are cleansed & sanctified by the Spirit of God. And that *God* doth pour into sanctified hearts that most excellent gift of charity; so that the love of *God* is shed abroad in the hearts of the people of *God* by the Spirit of *God*, and much more. All which are the known principles, doctrine, and practice of the people of God called Quakers. And if you did but experimentally and really own, and live in the same, you and we should be one. However inasmuch as you own in declaration, that which we own in principle, doctrine, and practice, or life and conversation, you ought to love us as the people of God, and free us from the force of the aforesaid Presentment, to all intents, constructions, and purposes and let us have equal liberty and tolleration with you, as aforesaid; and to stand up for our vindication and justification amongst men and Christians.

Written about the middle of the ninth moneth, 1662. *Richard Farnsworth.*

THE END.